

Good Evening,

Co-Chairs, Ranking Members, and members of the Committee, I am Cameron Seymour, a 2nd year Dental Student at UConn and resident of Farmington, CT.

First of all, I'd like to thank you for all of your incredible support for the University of Connecticut Health Center. Through the state investments in UConn Health, from UCONN 21st Century to Bioscience CT to your regular investments in our School of Medicine and Dental Medicine, you have made UConn an amazing university that is making a real difference to not only the students, but also the patients and community we serve.

I understand that the challenges you face in reducing the state budget deficit are at the very best disconcerting and I appreciate the opportunity you have given me to voice my opinion, albeit in the form of a letter.

I strongly urge you to minimize the cuts to UConn Health. The recommended budget released last week creates a significant gap between the state funding and what is needed to operate UConn Health next year. These cuts would reverse the progress made at UConn Health and I fear they will negatively impact my education and more importantly the care that we can provide to our patients.

I am originally from Portland, Maine and after being accepted to multiple dental schools in New England, I ultimately chose UConn precisely because of the amazing investments UConn was making in its research, education and facilities. While the support from the Connecticut state government makes UConn an affordable school, the most important benefit of these investments is the extraordinary impact it makes on our education.

I believe the students at the UConn Health Center are better educated and therefore will become better doctors and dentists because of the immense support we have received from the state. I specifically feel that UConn needs to position itself and the state of Connecticut as not only a national center for bioscience innovation, but also as a global center for innovative health care and research. It is my dream that the UConn Health Center will become the gold standard that all other healthcare facilities and schools around the world will emulate.

It is deeply discouraging that there is a possibility of cutting or reducing resources provided to the programs that have taught me how to provide health care to my community. The most important resources to my education have been technology, up-to-date dental instrumentation and clinic space, and above all a diverse, well-educated and caring staff of healthcare providers and researchers to teach and mentor me through the intense, rigorous curriculum of dental and medical school.

I cannot stress enough the consequences that these cuts will have on my education and more importantly my patients. A cut to UConn Health is a cut to our state's future healthcare system that I fear will have absolutely devastating consequences. All of the hard work that the state has put into UConn Health will be completely neutralized. I am confident that there will be a decrease in desire to attend the UConn Health Center as a student and also a dramatic decrease in the patient population as soon as the budget cuts become noticeable to our community. Health education, research, innovation and availability need to remain as the state's top priority if Connecticut is to firmly position itself as an international healthcare leader.

Again, thank you for giving me the opportunity to voice my opinion and speak of my concerns. As I mentioned at the beginning, I am extremely grateful for the support UConn Health has received thus far. I can't imagine being anywhere else for my education and I hope the gratitude I feel for UConn Health will continue to be felt by future students and patients. I urge you to find a way to restore these cuts so that students, staff, and patients can continue to count on UConn Health for education, jobs and innovative care throughout the future.

Sincerely,

Cameron Seymour  
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